First, whether there is in the United States a single medical society, which today has living, at the ripe age of ninety-five, a founder, who is still active at work as an author—with one book added to his list during the last year, and another soon coming from the press; and,

Secondly, whether, among the hundreds of county medical societies in the United States, there is still another able to present, as its founder, a member of the medical profession, who, in seventy years of strenuous work after leaving medical college, has come to have to his credit so unusual a record of professional and civic service such as can be claimed by Doctor Widney.

Through affiliation with the medical school founded by Doctor Widney, it has long been the privilege of the editor to be quite aware of this colleague's place in the medical life of Southern California; and on more occasions than one, he has seriously reproached himself for not having secured some of the valuable historical information concerning medical events of former days, which only Doctor Widney could impart. It is, therefore, a real satisfaction to be able to present, in this issue, the first part of Doctor Widney's life story, compiled by friends, after a recent interview.

* * *

Doctor Widney's Many Services to Profession and State.—The record of Doctor Widney's broad vision and achievements makes a fascinating story, even though briefly outlined, from a perusal of which every member of the California Medical Association may truly profit, as one always does in contemplating any life of such consistent service to both fellows and race.

Certainly every member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association should read the story of this colleague who brought that organization into existence, and who, in thus adding one more to a large list of honors, has doubly honored the Association as its founder-sponsor: a physician who received his medical degree in California as long ago as 1866, and whose subsequent life career has been so full and fruitful that even in California, where all things seem possible, it stands out, in what one may well term "conspicuous and splendid isolation."

The members of the California Medical Association, then, extend their greetings and good wishes to Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney, a still-surviving colleague who, in these last seventy years, has served so faithfully and also greatly honored his profession. Our heartfelt wish to him: That his days, still ahead, may be as full of meaning and joyful service as those of the eventful years gone by!

BASIC SCIENCE LAW OF STATE OF WASHINGTON: INTERESTING STATE SUPREME COURT DECISION

Purpose of Qualifying Certificate (Basic Science) Laws.—Nine years ago, on page 525 of the October, 1927, issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, appeared the first of a series of editorial discussions on so-called basic science laws, in each of which was emphasized the value of such legal enactments as a means of protecting the public health by providing mandatory legal provisions whereby healing-art practitioners, before being licensed to practice, should also be required to give evidence that they possess, in addition to purely professional attainments, adequate knowledge of certain basic or fundamental sciences.

* * *

The First Basic Science Laws of the United States.—Attention was called to the first law of this nature, that of Wisconsin, which was enacted on June 12, 1925, and of a similar act passed by the State of Connecticut, which became operative some seventeen days later. Included in the group of seven other commonwealths which have passed such laws since 1925, is the State of Washington; and it is concerning a recent decision by the Supreme Court of that state that the comments below are made.

* * *

Washington Supreme Court Rules that Chiropractors Cannot Claim Basic Science Act Exemption.—The action at issue, which recently came before the Supreme Court of the State of Washington, was on an appeal from the King County Superior Court, wherein a chiropractor, not licensed as such in Washington (and not eligible to chiropractic licensure, unless previously qualified through a basic science certificate), claimed, among other contentions, that to require him

"... to pass an examination in subjects [those of basic science: anatomy, physiology, chemistry, pathology, and hygiene], which have no relation whatever to the functions of chiropractic healing, would be a denial of liberty and of due process of law and, therefore, unconstitutional and void."

The opinion of the Supreme Court stated:

"... it cannot be doubted that no one has a natural or absolute right to practice medicine or surgery, and that the state may, under its police power, regulate within reasonable bounds, for the protection of the public health, the practice of medicine and surgery by defining the qualifications one must possess before being licensed to practice the same; and that a chiropractor is deprived of no constitutional right by being required, before receiving a certificate to practice his profession, to have adequate knowledge of the subjects laid down by the statutes of this state."

* * *

Opinion of the Washington Supreme Court Is Printed in This Issue.—The full opinion of the court appears on page 349 of this number. Because a qualifying certificate (basic science) law has been advocated for California, the decision of the Supreme Court of Washington is of importance. It is to be hoped, therefore, that members of the profession in California who are in doubt concerning the need of such legislation will take the time to read this recent opinion. The proposed California qualifying certificate, as discussed at the recent conference of state officers and county society secretaries, was commented on in last month's issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDI-

CINE on page 221. Readers who are interested in the subject may find the remarks there printed also worthy of perusal. As then stated, such a law to be of value in California must be passed by initiative vote of the electorate; but because of amended statutes for registration enacted by the 1935 Legislature, it will not now be possible to present to the voters of California a qualifying certificate law until the state election of November, 1938.

The basic science laws which to date have been enacted by other commonwealths all attest to the great value of this type of legislation, especially in states having "multiple examining boards," of which California is one.

KERN COUNTY HOSPITAL CASE DECIDED

Petition of Kern County Supervisors for Hearing Before Supreme Court Denied: Patients Able to Pay Can No Longer Be Admitted to County Hospitals.—The decision of the District Court of Appeal for the Fourth Appellate District permanently enjoining the admission of non-indigent patients to the Kern General Hospital, was made the present law in California when the Supreme Court, on March 30, 1936, denied the petition for a hearing of the Kern County Supervisors, supported by *amici curiae* representing the supervisors of the counties of Santa Barbara, Solano, Shasta, Calaveras, Colusa, Sutter, Stanislaus, San Luis Obispo, Tehama, Yolo, and San Joaquin.

In its decision the Appellate Court defined indigency in a manner that may require further interpretation. We suggest that the opinion, which is reprinted in full on page 189 of the March number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, be once again carefully read.

If the petition had been granted it would have been necessary to argue the case once again and the Supreme Court could have come to any conclusion that it considered to be required by the law. The effect of the denial by the Supreme Court of the petition for a hearing is that the decision of the District Court of Appeal for the Fourth Appellate District is final and is the present law in this State on the subject of the powers of boards of supervisors of counties with respect to the admission of patients to county hospitals.

It is noteworthy that the District Court of Appeal decided that the admission of patients able to pay the cost of private hospitalization into county hospitals is contrary to Article IV, Section 31, of the Constitution of the State of California. The Court reasoned that to hospitalize patients able to pay the cost of private hospitalization would amount to a gift of public funds to private individuals. The foregoing section of the Constitution forbids the State or any political subdivision of the State to make a gift of public moneys to any private individual. Thus, it is clear that the reasoning of the opinion of the District Court of Appeal forbids not only boards of supervisors to admit patients into the county hospital who are able to pay the cost of private hospitalization, but also forbids the legislature to enact any statute purporting to authorize boards of supervisors so to do, for the legislature as well as county boards of supervisors is bound by the Constitution.

Thus the long efforts of the taxpayers* of Kern County, including physicians and hospitals, to stop this use of public funds, have succeeded. The California Medical Association, recognizing the destructive effect upon medicine and hospitals in California of any extension of public hospitalization to patients able to pay for care, has assisted whenever possible, and is gratified at the success and grateful to those whose efforts brought it about.

ON THIS AND THAT

Danger of Overdoing Vitamin Therapy.—In our March issue, on page 149, Professor Chauncey D. Leake, of the department of pharmacology of the University of California Medical School, sounded a needed warning on the dangers of indiscriminate and indefinite use of vitamins. The fact that a death has already been recorded in California, presumably because of improper vitamin therapy, should make physicians willing to reconsider the entire subject of vitamins; and this suggests, also, that whenever possible, the public should be cautioned to accept with hesitancy many of the bold and extreme promises concerning the value of vitamins so greatly exploited in the last several years in lay periodicals and the press. We are sure that Doctor Leake's article will be followed by reports in medical journals from the pens of other observers which will add to the knowledge concerning the potency of vitamin principles, and thus favor a more scientific usage and dosage.

* * *

Cancer Studies in California.—About five years ago two members of the California Medical Association, Doctors Walter B. Coffey and John D. Humber of San Francisco, read a paper on the treatment of cancer with an aqueous extract of the suprarenal gland; and when the article was printed in the September, 1930, issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, it caused much comment, both for and against what was advocated.

One of the indirect results of the discussion at that time was the authorization by the California Medical Association for the formation of its Cancer Commission, which, in more recent years, has brought to publication a notable series of articles on cancer, compiled by members of the Association and received with much favorable comment, both within and without the State.

The March, 1936, issue of the JOURNAL, page 160, presented a report from Doctors Coffey and Humber on 7,513 advanced cancer patients who

* The case was commenced by Doctors Goodall, McNamara, Cuneo, Long, Brown, Gundry, Compton, Moore, Fox, and McLain, as taxpayers of Kern County. They were represented by Attorney Alfred Siemon of Bakersfield, the law firm of Finlayson, Bennett & Morrow of Los Angeles, and Attorney Hartley F. Peart, General Counsel of the California Medical Association.